

House Republican Press Release

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Traffic Signal Preemption Device Bill Passes House



Scribner Co-Sponsors Restriction on Signal-Altering Devices

HARTFORD- The state House of Representatives today passed legislation that prohibits the use of a traffic signal preemption device. Representative David Scribner (R-Brookfield), Ranking member of the General Assembly's Transportation Committee co-sponsored the bill.

A traffic signal preemption device is a device capable of changing a traffic control signal or altering the timing or phasing of the signal. Exceptions to the prohibition include a sworn law enforcement officer; firefighter; federal, state, municipal, or fire district employee with control over traffic signals; or a commercial ambulance driver who has a permit for the device issued by the Department of Transportation (DOT). The exceptions apply when these individuals are responding to an emergency and are using the device in furtherance of their duties. The bill sets the fee for a use permit at \$ 20 annually.

The bill prohibits an unauthorized person from possessing a traffic signal preemption device and prohibits the device, with exceptions, from being in or part of a motor vehicle. It also prohibits someone from selling or transferring a preemption device except in certain circumstances. A DOT permit is required for certain people to sell or transfer a preemption device.

"There is a clear need for the restriction of the use of signal preemption devices, regulating them, and preventing their abuse," said Representative Scribner. "The ability to alter the flow and pattern of moving traffic should come with great responsibility, and the technology should not be in the hands of any motorist who wants it. Only emergency personnel with good cause should be able to utilize such devices. Any unauthorized person who uses such a device will be subject to severe penalties under this bill."

Anyone who violates the use prohibition or any of the bill's other requirements must be fined up to \$ 5,000, or imprisoned for up to 90 days, or both. However, if use of the device results in a traffic accident, the violator must be fined up to \$ 15,000, imprisoned for up to five years, or both. If the accident results in someone's serious impairment of a bodily function, the violator must be fined up to \$ 20,000, imprisoned for up to 10 years, or both. If the accident results in a death, the violator must be fined up to \$ 25,000, imprisoned for up to 15 years, or both.

The bill will now head to the state Senate for action there. The regular legislative session ends on midnight, Wednesday June 8th.